



Public Notice

US Army Corps
of Engineers
Sacramento District

Corps Number: 200600083

Date: July 7, 2006

Comments Due: August 7, 2006

Subject: The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District, (Corps) is evaluating a permit application to construct intake and outfall structures, which would result in impacts to Thomas Creek, Whites Creek (South Fork and North Fork), Steamboat Ditch, and wetlands adjacent to Steamboat Creek. This notice is to inform interested parties of the proposed activity and to solicit comments. This notice may also be viewed at the Corps web site at <http://www.spk.usace.army.mil/organizations/cespk-co/regulatory/PNs/index.html>.

Authority: This application is being evaluated under Section 404 of the Clean Water Act for the discharge of dredged or fill material in waters of the United States.

Applicant: Washoe County Department of Water Resources
4930 Energy Way
Reno, Nevada 89502
775-954-4600

Location: The project site is located in south Reno in Sections 13, 19, 20 & 21, Township 18 North, Range 20 East Washoe County, Nevada, on the Steamboat and Mt Rose NE USGS topographic quadrangle maps.

Project Description: Washoe County Department of Water Resources is proposing to construct a water treatment facility in southeast Reno (see Sheet 1 of 10 of the attachments to this public notice). The proposal will include the construction of the South Truckee Meadows Water treatment plant and include four diversion structures to withdraw water from Thomas Creek, South Fork Whites Creek, North Fork Whites Creek, and Steamboat Ditch, and will include constructing one outfall into Steamboat Ditch (to receive water from Thomas Creek). Additionally, an outfall structure to discharge water collected from one branch of Whites Creek, stormwater, and irrigation water into Steamboat Creek will be constructed; none of this water will be diverted to the water treatment plant.

This proposal is part of a larger overall water distribution plan, the "South Truckee Meadows Facility Plan." The current proposal is part of the "lower" treatment facility that is part of the overall plan. The Corps-regulated impacts to Thomas Creek, Steamboat Ditch, Whites Creek, and Steamboat Creek are showed on the area map on Sheet 2 of 10 of the attachments to this public notice. Each impact area is arbitrarily assigned a letter designation on the map, A-F. In general, the concrete diversion dams will create a small pool in the associated tributary and water will flow from the diversion structures via gravity into pipes. The concrete dams and outfalls will be permanent structures in the associated tributary. Aggregate base and granular materials will be used to stabilize associated structures and bury associated pipelines. Temporary impacts associated with the construction will be restored after project construction; the total temporary impacts for all proposed impacts is expected to be about 0.2 acres.

Washoe County holds water rights for 847 acre-feet of water from Thomas Creek. This water will be diverted from Thomas Creek with a concrete dam structure and discharged into Steamboat Ditch to

convey it to the Steamboat Ditch diversion structure (see Sheet 5 of 10 on the attached drawings). The Thomas Creek dam will be approximately 65 feet wide (see Sheet 3 of 10; Drawing A). It will allow water to be collected and diverted into a 12" pipe that will direct water to Steamboat Ditch. At Steamboat Ditch, a concrete outfall structure will be created to dissipate energy from the diversion pipe (see Sheet 4 of 10; Drawing B). Water withdrawn from Thomas Creek will flow downstream in Steamboat Ditch and be withdrawn from the ditch with another concrete diversion structure which will not impound water (see Sheet 5 of 10; Drawing C). This "Thomas Creek" water will then be directed into another 12" pipe that will deliver water to the water treatment plant.

Washoe County holds water rights for 3,422 acre-feet of water from Whites Creek which will be withdrawn at two locations: the South Fork Whites Creek and the North Fork Whites Creek (for location, see Sheet 2 of 10 of the attached drawings). The diversion dam of South Fork Whites Creek will be less than 20 feet wide (see Sheet 6 of 10; Drawing D). Water will be diverted into another 12" pipe and directed to the water treatment plant. This pipeline will combine with the "Thomas Creek" pipeline and then flow towards the water treatment plant.

The North Fork Whites Creek diversion will be on the east side of Highway 395 (see Sheets 2 and 7 of 10; Drawing E). This concrete diversion is associated with and will work in conjunction with an existing concrete irrigation diversion structure. Water collected at this location will be diverted into a 12" pipe and delivered to the water treatment plant via a pumping station.

Finally, a gabion outfall structure will discharge water from another unnamed branch of Whites Creek, the branch that flows immediately south of Highway 395 and crosses underneath Virginia Street (near the Highway 395 overpass over Virginia Street). The purpose of this structure is to collect this tributary water, stormwater flows, and irrigation water to more directly discharge it into Steamboat Creek (see Sheet 2 of 10 for the location and Sheet 8 of 10; Drawing F). This gabion outfall structure is designed to dissipate water energy and minimize impacts to Steamboat Creek at the discharge point.

Summary of Proposed Impacts

	Direct Fill Impacts		
	Size of Impoundment (square feet)	Concrete Quantity (cubic yards)	Other Fill (cubic yards)
A. Thomas Creek Diversion Dam	1668	29.6	35
B. Steamboat Ditch (outfall for A)	0	13.1	7
C. Steamboat Ditch Diversion Dam	0	10.6	4
D. South Fork Whites Creek Dam	163	9.6	3.5
E. North Fork Whites Creek Dam	853	15.6	22
<i>Location E includes minor impacts to NDOT mitigation wetlands, including 6 cubic yards of concrete (excluding existing concrete diversion) and 6.5 cubic yards of other aggregate fill.</i>			
F. Steamboat Creek Outfall	0	7.7 (as gabions)	

Purpose and Need: The purpose of the proposed project is to provide municipal drinking water and other domestic water uses to southeast Reno. There is a need to provide more potable water in the rapidly growing south Reno area.

Additonal Information:

Environmental Setting. The land use at project site was formerly ranching with long-term flood irrigation practies. As Reno expands, more and more of the area is converted to urban housing and commercial development. Prior to development, the habitat quality and diversity was low to average and was predominatley a grassland ecosystem. Native vegetation (the sage brush association) was removed for livestock grazing. Several irrigation ditches traversed the area; nearly all of these were water diversions from the Truckee River. The irrigation ditches are, for the most part, still evident, however the flood irrigation practices have been dramatically reduced. The predominant vegetation association is green lawns and non-native trees around houses and roadways and concrete parking logs in commercial areas. The proposed project will divert water that was used for irrigation and divert it to a water treatment plant for potable water.

Mitigation. The Corps requires that applicants consider and use all reasonable and practical measures to avoid and minimize impacts to aquatic resources. If the applicant is unable to avoid or minimize all impacts, the Corps may require compensatory mitigation. The Corps has not determined if the project will be authorized or, if the proposal is authorized, whether mitigation will be required. If mitigation is required, the applicant proposes to enhance 125 linear feet of degraded segments of Thomas and Whites Creek and purchase 0.84 acres (representing a 3:1 mitigation to impact ratio) by purchasing mitigation credits from Nevada TriPartners on the Damonte Ranch.

Water Quality Certification: A permit for the described work will not be issued until certification, as required under Section 401 of the Clean Water Act, has been granted or is waived from the Nevada Division of Environmental Protection (NDEP). A waiver will be deemed to occur if the state fails or refuses to act on the request for certification within 60 days.

Section 404(b)(1) Evaluation: The activity's impact on the public interest will include application of the Section 404(b)(1) guidelines promulgated by the Administrator, Environmental Protection Agency (40 CFR Part 230).

Historic Properties: Based on the preliminary information, cultural resources not expected within the project's area of potential effect. The Corps will initiate consultation with the Nevada State Historic Preservation Office, under Section 106 of the National Historic Preservation Act.

Endangered Species: Based on a prelminary review, the project will not affect any Federally-listed threatened or endangered species or their critical habitat that are protected by the Endangered Species Act.

Evaluation Factors: The decision whether to issue a permit will be based on an evaluation of the probable impacts, including cumulative impacts, of the described activity on the public interest. That decision will reflect the national concern for both protection and utilization of important resources. The benefit, which reasonably may be expected to accrue from the described activity, must be balanced against its reasonably foreseeable detriments. All factors which may be relevant to the described activity will be considered, including the cumulative effects thereof; among those are conservation, economics, aesthetics, general environmental concerns, wetlands, historic properties, fish and wildlife values, flood hazards, floodplain values, land use, navigation, shoreline erosion and accretion, recreation, water supply and conservation, water quality, energy needs, safety, food and fiber production, mineral needs, consideration of property ownership and, in general, the needs and welfare of the people.

The Corps is soliciting comments from the public, Federal, State, and local agencies and officials, Indian tribes, and other interested parties in order to consider and evaluate the impacts of this proposed activity. Any comments received will be considered by the Corps to determine whether to issue, modify, condition, or deny a permit for this proposal. To make this decision, comments are used to assess impacts on endangered species, historic properties, water quality, general environmental effects, and other public interest factors listed above. Comments are used in the preparation of an Environmental Assessment and/or an Environmental Impact Statement pursuant to the National Environmental Policy Act. Comments are also used to determine the need for a public hearing; to determine the overall public interest of the proposed activity; and to determine whether practical alternatives to the proposal are available and capable of being pursued.

Submitting Comments: Comments, referencing Corps Public Notice number 200600083, must be received on or before the expiration date (located above) to be considered in subsequent actions on this application. Please note that all comment letters received are subject to release to the public through the Freedom of Information Act. If you have questions or need additional information please contact the applicant or the Corps' project manager, Richard Gebhart (see below).

Anyone whose interests may be affected by the proposed work is invited to submit favorable or unfavorable written comments to:

Richard Gebhart
US Army Corps of Engineers, Sacramento District
Reno Regulatory Office
300 Booth Street, Room 2103
Reno, Nevada 89509-1361

Email: richard.a.gebhart@usace.army.mil

Phone: 775-784-5307

Public Hearing: Before the expiration date of this notice, anyone may request, in writing, that a public hearing be held to consider this application. Requests shall specifically state the reason(s) for holding a public hearing. If the District Engineer determines that the information received in response to this notice is inadequate for thorough evaluation, a public hearing may be warranted. If a public hearing is warranted, interested parties will be notified of the time, date, and location.

Attachments: 10 pages